



General Information: (312) 353-1880

Media Contact: Paul LaPorte

(312) 353-1138

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## **NEBRASKA WORKPLACE FATALITIES, 2004**

Fatal work injuries totaled 46 in 2004 for Nebraska, down from the 51 on the job fatalities that occurred in 2003, according to the U.S. Department of Labor's Bureau of Labor Statistics. Regional Commissioner, Jay A. Mousa noted that this year's fatality count, though not much lower than in 2003, was well below the 83 fatal work injuries that took place in 2002. Most workplace fatalities in the State in 2004 were the result of highway incidents (11), falls to a lower level (7), and contact with electric current (5). Taken together, these three events<sup>1</sup> accounted for one-half of the workplace fatalities in Nebraska.

Highway incidents accounted for more on-the-job fatalities than any other event in both Nebraska and the nation. The number of fatal injuries from highway incidents in the State did however decline by 9 from its 2003 level of 20. During the 13 years the fatality census has been conducted, the number of highway incidents in Nebraska has ranged from 9 to 32. (See table A.) Work-related deaths due to highway incidents accounted for about one of every four occupational fatalities in both Nebraska and the nation as a whole in 2004.

The 7 workplace fatalities resulting from falls to a lower level accounted for a similar share of the fatalities in both Nebraska and the nation, at 15 and 13 percent, respectively. These 7 fatalities were the third highest reported for this event in the State since the series began in 1992.

The 5 fatal injuries due to electrocution accounted for 11 percent of all work-related fatalities in the State. Nationwide, electrocutions accounted for a smaller share of worker deaths (4 percent).

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<sup>1</sup> Fatal events are categorized into several major groupings including transportation incidents, assaults and violent acts, and falls. These major groups are further broken down into more detailed groups. For example, transportation incidents includes highway incidents and aircraft incidents; assaults and violent acts includes homicides and suicides; and falls includes falls to a lower level (as from a roof or ladder) and falls on the same level (as from grease on a floor or ice on a sidewalk).

Other work-related fatalities in Nebraska included pedestrian incidents (workers who were struck by a vehicle) 4, and nonhighway transportation incidents, such as those that might occur on a farm or industrial premises, 3, in 2004. (See table 1.)

Table A. Fatal occupational injuries in Nebraska by selected event groups, 1992-2004

Year	Total fatalities	Highway incidents		Falls to lower level		Contact with electric current	
		Number	Percent	Number	Percent	Number	Percent
1992	43	9	21	4	9	5	12
1993	78	19	24	--	--	--	--
1994	83	9	11	14	17	--	--
1995	54	10	19	8	15	--	--
1996	56	11	20	5	9	3	5
1997	46	9	20	5	11	3	7
1998	56	18	32	--	--	4	7
1999	66	17	26	4	6	--	--
2000	59	22	37	3	5	--	--
2001	57	26	46	5	9	--	--
2002	83	32	39	6	7	5	6
2003	51	20	39	--	--	--	--
2004	46	11	24	7	15	5	11

Dashes indicate no data reported or data that do not meet publication criteria.

Nationwide, a total of 5,703 fatal work injuries were reported in 2004, an increase of 2 percent from the revised total of 5,575 fatalities reported for 2003. Despite the increase, the total for 2004 was the third lowest annual count recorded by the fatality census, which has been conducted yearly since 1992. (See table B.) Fatal highway incidents were up slightly in 2004 after declining the two previous years. The 1,374 deaths from highway incidents in 2004 represented about one out of every four fatal work injuries and continued to be the leading cause of on-the-job fatalities. Fatalities resulting from both falls to a lower level and being struck by an object represented the highest annual totals ever reported by the fatality census for these events. The number of work-related deaths from falls to a lower level increased from 604 in 2003 to 732 in 2004, while workplace fatalities resulting from being struck by an object were up from 531 in 2003 to 596 in 2004.

The number of workplace homicides recorded in the U.S. in 2004 dropped sharply from the number reported in 2003. The 551 workplace homicides in 2004 represented a 13-percent decline over the year and was the lowest annual total yet recorded by the fatality census. Overall, workplace homicides were down 49 percent from the high of 1,080 recorded in 1994 (excluding the 2,886 work-related homicides resulting from the terrorist attacks of September 11, 2001).

Table B. Fatal occupational injuries in the United States by selected event groups, 1992-2004

Year	Total fatalities	Highway incidents		Falls to lower level		Struck by object		Homicides	
		Number	Percent	Number	Percent	Number	Percent	Number	Percent
1992	6,217	1,158	19	507	8	557	9	1,044	17
1993	6,331	1,242	20	534	8	565	9	1,074	17
1994	6,632	1,343	20	580	9	591	9	1,080	16
1995	6,275	1,346	21	578	9	547	9	1,036	17
1996	6,202	1,346	22	610	10	582	9	927	15
1997	6,238	1,393	22	653	10	579	9	860	14
1998	6,055	1,442	24	625	10	520	9	714	12
1999	6,054	1,496	25	634	10	585	10	651	11
2000	5,920	1,365	23	659	11	571	10	677	11
2001 <sup>1</sup>	5,915	1,409	24	700	12	553	9	643	11
2002	5,534	1,373	25	638	12	505	9	609	11
2003 <sup>2</sup>	5,575	1,353	24	604	11	531	10	632	11
2004	5,703	1,374	24	732	13	596	10	551	10

<sup>1</sup> Totals for 2001 exclude fatalities due to the events of September 11, 2001 which claimed the lives of 2,886 persons in work status.

<sup>2</sup> The BLS news release issued September 22, 2004, reported a total of 5,559 fatal work injuries for calendar year 2003. Since then, an additional 16 job-related fatalities were identified, bringing the total job-related fatality count for 2003 to 5,575.

#### Key characteristics of workplace fatalities in Nebraska in 2004:

- Men accounted for 98 percent of the work-related fatalities in the State with 45 deaths. Transportation incidents, which include highway, nonhighway, pedestrian, air, water, and rail, accounted for almost one-half of these fatal injuries. (See table 2.)
- In Nebraska, 87 percent of those who died from a workplace injury were white non-Hispanic, (40 fatal work injuries), while Hispanic or Latino workers (4) made up 9 percent.
- Workers 25-54 years old—the prime working age group—accounted for 72 percent of the State's work-related fatalities in 2004; 24 percent were 55 years or older.
- Sixty-three percent of workers killed on-the-job in Nebraska worked for wages and salaries, the rest were self-employed.
- The agriculture, forestry, fishing and hunting sector had the largest number of fatalities (14). More than one-half of these fatalities were the result of transportation incidents. The construction sector experienced the second most fatalities in the State with eight. (See table 3.)
- From an occupational perspective, managers of farms and ranches suffered the most work-related deaths (11), followed by drivers of heavy trucks and tractor-trailers (4). In both occupations, transportation incidents were responsible for most, if not all of the fatal injuries. (See table 4.)

### Additional data available

Additional Census of Fatal Occupational Injuries data are available from the BLS Web site at [www.bls.gov/iif](http://www.bls.gov/iif). Data tables for 2004 are available for all 50 states, the District of Columbia, and selected metropolitan areas.

## **TECHNICAL NOTES**

### Background of the program

The Census of Fatal Occupational Injuries, part of the BLS occupational safety and health statistics program, provides a complete count of fatal work injuries available. The program uses diverse state and federal data sources to identify, verify, and profile fatal work injuries. Information about each workplace fatality (occupation and other worker characteristics, equipment being used, and circumstances of the event) is obtained by cross-referencing source documents, such as death certificates, workers' compensation records, and reports to federal and state agencies. This method assures counts are as complete and accurate as possible.

### Definitions

For a fatality to be included in the census, the decedent must have been employed (that is working for pay, compensation, or profit) at the time of the event, engaged in a legal work activity, or present at the site of the incident as a requirement of his or her job. These criteria are generally broader than those used by federal and state agencies administering specific laws and regulations. (Fatalities that occur during a person's commute to or from work are excluded from the census counts.)

Data presented in this release include deaths occurring in 2004 that resulted from traumatic occupational injuries. An injury is defined as any intentional or unintentional wound or damage to the body resulting from acute exposure to energy, such as heat, electricity, or kinetic energy from a crash, or from the absence of such essentials as heat or oxygen caused by a specific event, incident, or series of events within a single workday or shift. Included are open wounds, intracranial and internal injuries, heatstroke, hypothermia, asphyxiation, acute poisonings resulting from short-term exposures limited to the worker's shift, suicides and homicides, and work injuries listed as underlying or contributory causes of death.

Information on work-related fatal illnesses is not reported in the BLS census and is excluded from the attached tables because the latency period of many occupational illnesses and the difficulty of linking illnesses to work exposures make identification of a universe problematic.

### Measurement techniques and limitations

Data for the Census of Fatal Occupational Injuries are compiled from various federal, state, and local administrative sources—including death certificates, workers' compensation reports and claims, reports to various regulatory agencies, medical examiner reports, and police reports—as well as news and other non-governmental reports. Diverse sources are used because studies have shown that no single source captures all job-related fatalities. Source documents are matched so that each fatality is counted only once. To ensure that a fatality occurred while

the decedent was at work, information is verified from two or more independent source documents or from a source document and a follow-up questionnaire. Approximately 30 data elements are collected, coded, and tabulated, including information about the worker, the fatal incident, and the machinery or equipment involved.

#### Federal/state agency coverage

The Census of Fatal Occupational Injuries includes data for all fatal work injuries, whether the decedent was working in a job covered by the Occupational Safety and Health Administration (OSHA) or other federal or state agencies or is outside the scope of regulatory coverage. Thus, any comparison between the BLS fatality census counts and those released by other agencies should take into account the different coverage requirements and definitions being used by each agency.

Several federal and state agencies have jurisdiction over workplace safety and health. OSHA and affiliated agencies in states with approved safety programs cover the largest portion of the nation's workers. However, injuries and illnesses occurring in certain industries or activities, such as coal, metal, and nonmetal mining and highway, water, rail, and air transportation, are excluded from OSHA coverage because they are covered by other federal agencies, such as the Mine Safety and Health Administration and various agencies within the Department of Transportation.

Fatalities occurring among several other groups of workers are generally not covered by any federal or state agencies. These groups include self-employed and unpaid family workers, which accounted for about 20 percent of the nation's fatalities; laborers on small farms, accounting for about 1 percent; and state and local government employees in states without OSHA-approved safety programs, which accounted for about 4 percent. (Approximately one-half of the states have approved OSHA safety programs, which cover state and local government employees).

#### Acknowledgments

BLS thanks the Nebraska Workers' Compensation Court for its efforts in collecting accurate, comprehensive, and useful data on fatal work injuries. BLS also appreciates the efforts of all federal, state, local, and private sector agencies that submitted source documents used to identify fatal work injuries. Among these agencies are the Occupational Safety and Health Administration; the National Transportation Safety Board; the U.S. Coast Guard; the Mine Safety and Health Administration; the Employment Standards Administration (Federal Employees' Compensation and Longshore and Harbor Workers' divisions); the Department of Energy; state vital statistics registrars, coroners, and medical examiners; state departments of health, labor and industries and workers' compensation agencies; state and local police departments; and state farm bureaus.

TABLE 1. Fatal occupational injuries by event or exposure and major private industry <sup>1</sup> sector, Nebraska, 2004

Event or exposure <sup>2</sup>	Total fatalities (number)	Goods producing				Service providing							
		Total goods producing	Natural resources and mining <sup>3</sup>	Construction	Manufacturing	Total service providing	Trade, transportation, and utilities	Information	Financial activities	Professional and business services	Education and health services	Leisure and hospitality	Other services
Total.....	46	23	14	8	--	19	8	--	--	5	--	--	--
Contact with objects and equipment.....	3	3	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--
Falls.....	9	3	--	--	--	6	3	--	--	--	--	--	--
Fall to lower level.....	7	3	--	--	--	4	--	--	--	--	--	--	--
Exposure to harmful substances or environments.....	7	6	--	3	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--
Contact with electric current.....	5	5	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--
Contact with wiring, transformers, or other electrical components.....	4	4	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--
Transportation incidents.....	21	10	8	--	--	9	5	--	--	--	--	--	--
Highway incident.....	11	4	3	--	--	6	4	--	--	--	--	--	--
Collision between vehicles, mobile equipment.....	4	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--
Noncollision incident.....	4	--	--	--	--	4	--	--	--	--	--	--	--
Nonhighway incident, except rail, air, water.....	3	3	3	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--
Pedestrian, nonpassenger struck by vehicle, mobile equipment.....	4	--	--	--	--	3	--	--	--	--	--	--	--
Assaults and violent acts.....	4	--	--	--	--	3	--	--	--	--	--	--	--

<sup>1</sup> Classified according to the North American Industry Classification System, 2002.

<sup>2</sup> Based on the 1992 BLS Occupational Injury and Illness Classification Manual.

<sup>3</sup> Includes fatalities at all establishments categorized as Mining (Sector 21) in the North American Industry Classification System, 2002, including establishments not governed by the Mine Safety and Health Administration (MSHA) rules and reporting, such as those in Oil and Gas Extraction.

NOTE: Totals for major categories may include subcategories not shown separately. Dashes indicate no data reported or data that do not meet publication criteria. n.e.c. means "not elsewhere classified." Data for 2004 are preliminary.

SOURCE: U.S. Department of Labor, Bureau of Labor Statistics, in cooperation with State and Federal agencies, Census of Fatal Occupational Injuries

**Table 2. Fatal occupational injuries by worker characteristics and event or exposure, Nebraska, 2004**

Worker characteristics	Total fatalities (number)	Event or exposure <sup>1</sup>					
		Transportation incidents <sup>2</sup>	Assaults and violent acts <sup>3</sup>	Contact with objects and equipment	Falls	Exposure to harmful sub- stances or environ- ments	Fires and explosions
Total.....	46	21	4	3	9	7	--
<b>Employee Status</b>							
Wage and Salary Workers <sup>4</sup> .....	29	14	--	--	6	4	--
Self-employed <sup>5</sup> .....	17	7	--	--	3	3	--
<b>Sex</b>							
Men.....	45	21	4	3	8	7	--
Women.....	--	--	--	--	--	--	--
<b>Age</b>							
Under 16 years.....	--	--	--	--	--	--	--
16 to 17 years.....	--	--	--	--	--	--	--
18 to 19 years.....	--	--	--	--	--	--	--
20 to 24 years.....	--	--	--	--	--	--	--
25 to 34 years.....	5	--	--	--	--	3	--
35 to 44 years.....	14	5	--	--	--	3	--
45 to 54 years.....	14	9	--	--	--	--	--
55 to 64 years.....	3	--	--	--	--	--	--
65 years and over.....	8	3	--	--	3	--	--
<b>Race or Ethnic Origin<sup>6</sup></b>							
White, non-Hispanic.....	40	19	4	3	7	5	--
Black, non-Hispanic.....	--	--	--	--	--	--	--
Hispanic or Latino.....	4	--	--	--	--	--	--
American Indian or Alaska Native.....	--	--	--	--	--	--	--
Asian.....	--	--	--	--	--	--	--
Native Hawaiian or Pacific Islander.....	--	--	--	--	--	--	--

<sup>1</sup> Based on the 1992 BLS Occupational Injury and Illness Classification Manual.

<sup>2</sup> Includes highway, nonhighway, air, water, rail fatalities, and fatalities resulting from being struck by a vehicle.

<sup>3</sup> Includes violence by persons, self-inflicted injury, and attacks by animals.

<sup>4</sup> May include volunteers and workers receiving other types of compensation.

<sup>5</sup> Includes self-employed workers, owners of unincorporated businesses and farms, paid and unpaid family workers, and may include some owners of incorporated businesses or members of partnerships.

<sup>6</sup> Persons identified as Hispanic or Latino may be of any race. The race

categories shown exclude data for Hispanics and Latinos.

NOTE: Totals for major categories may include subcategories not shown separately. Dashes indicate no data reported or data that do not meet publication criteria. Data for 2004 are preliminary.

SOURCE: U.S. Department of Labor, Bureau of Labor Statistics, in cooperation with State and Federal agencies, Census of Fatal Occupational Injuries

TABLE 3. Fatal occupational injuries by industry and event or exposure, Nebraska, 2004

Industry <sup>1</sup>	NAICS code <sup>1</sup>	Total fatalities (number)	Event or exposure <sup>2</sup>					
			Transportation incidents <sup>3</sup>	Assaults and violent acts <sup>4</sup>	Contact with objects and equipment	Falls	Exposure to harmful sub- stances or environments	Fires and explosions
<b>Total</b>		46	21	4	3	9	7	--
<b>Private Industry</b>		42	19	4	3	9	7	--
<b>Goods Producing</b> .....		23	10	--	3	3	6	--
<b>Natural Resources and Mining</b> <sup>5</sup> .....		14	8	--	--	--	--	--
<b>Agriculture, Forestry, Fishing and Hunting</b> .....	11	14	8	--	--	--	--	--
Crop Production.....	111	10	6	--	--	--	--	--
Animal Production.....	112	3	--	--	--	--	--	--
Cattle Ranching and Farming.....	1121	3	--	--	--	--	--	--
<b>Construction</b> .....		8	--	--	--	--	3	--
<b>Construction</b> .....	23	8	--	--	--	--	3	--
Specialty Trade Contractors.....	238	6	--	--	--	--	--	--
<b>Service producing</b> .....		19	9	3	--	6	--	--
<b>Trade, Transportation, and Utilities</b> .....		8	5	--	--	3	--	--
<b>Transportation and Warehousing</b> .....	48-49	4	--	--	--	--	--	--
<b>Professional and Business Services</b> .....		5	--	--	--	--	--	--
<b>Professional, Scientific, and Technical Services</b> .....	54	3	--	--	--	--	--	--
Professional, Scientific, and Technical Services.....	541	3	--	--	--	--	--	--
<b>Government</b> <sup>6</sup>		4	--	--	--	--	--	--

<sup>1</sup> Classified according to the North American Industry Classification System, 2002.

<sup>2</sup> Based on the 1992 BLS Occupational Injury and Illness Classification Manual.

<sup>3</sup> Includes highway, nonhighway, air, water, rail fatalities, and fatalities resulting from being struck by a vehicle.

<sup>4</sup> Includes violence by persons, self-inflicted injury, and attacks by animals.

<sup>5</sup> Includes fatalities at all establishments categorized as Mining (Sector 21) in the North American Industry Classification System, 2002, including establishments not governed by the Mine Safety and Health Administration (MSHA) rules and reporting, such as those in Oil and Gas Extraction.

<sup>6</sup> Includes fatalities to workers employed by governmental organizations regardless of industry.

NOTE: Totals for major categories may include subcategories not shown separately. Dashes indicate no data reported or data that do not meet publication criteria. Data for 2004 are preliminary.

SOURCE: U.S. Department of Labor, Bureau of Labor Statistics, in cooperation with State and Federal agencies, Census of Fatal Occupational Injuries



**TABLE 4. Fatal occupational injuries by occupation and event or exposure, Nebraska, 2004**

Occupation <sup>1</sup>	Total fatalities (number)	Event or exposure <sup>2</sup>					
		Transportation incidents <sup>3</sup>	Assaults and violent acts <sup>4</sup>	Contact with objects and equipment	Falls	Exposure to harmful sub- stances or environments	Fires and explosions
Total.....	46	21	4	3	9	7	--
Management occupations.....	16	8	--	--	--	--	--
Other management occupations.....	14	7	--	--	--	--	--
Agricultural managers.....	11	6	--	--	--	--	--
Farmers and ranchers.....	11	6	--	--	--	--	--
Sales and related occupations.....	3	--	--	--	--	--	--
Construction and extraction occupations.....	8	--	--	--	--	3	--
Construction trades workers.....	8	--	--	--	--	3	--
Installation, maintenance, and repair occupations.....	3	--	--	--	--	--	--
Transportation and material moving occupations.....	8	6	--	--	--	--	--
Motor vehicle operators.....	4	4	--	--	--	--	--
Driver/sales workers and truck drivers.....	4	4	--	--	--	--	--
Truck drivers, heavy and tractor-trailer.....	4	4	--	--	--	--	--

<sup>1</sup> Based on the 2000 Standard Occupational Classification System.

<sup>2</sup> Based on the 1992 BLS Occupational Injury and Illness Classification Manual.

<sup>3</sup> Includes highway, nonhighway, air, water, rail fatalities, and fatalities resulting from being struck by a vehicle.

<sup>4</sup> Includes violence by persons, self-inflicted injury, and attacks by animals.

NOTE: Totals for major categories may include subcategories not shown separately.

Dashes indicate no data reported or data that do not meet publication criteria. Data for 2004 are preliminary.

SOURCE: U.S. Department of Labor, Bureau of Labor Statistics, in cooperation with State and Federal agencies, Census of Fatal Occupational Injuries